Problem: Hospital design typically does not incorporate input from frontline nursing staff. Consequently, hospital environments do not always facilitate safe, efficient care and staff satisfaction from the nurse’s perceptive.

Evidence: Research has demonstrated that hospital design does matter to nurses and has an impact on workplace performance. Specific aspects of design such as building and unit layout, work space for staff, lighting, and use of color matter most.

Strategy: User Groups composed of clinical nursing staff and leadership have been organized to provide a modality for frontline staff to work with architects and engineers to design an addition to the existing hospital. Sessions have resulted in the design of patient rooms, family-waiting/consult areas, soiled holding, equipment, and clean supply rooms, team stations, and medication rooms.

Interior design elements such as paint colors, design/composition of flooring to lessen the risk of falls and facilitate ambulation of patients with macular changes have been selected by clinical staff. Light-control switches, electrical outlets, and headwall gas placement have been designated by nursing staff.

Practice Change: Nurses have designed a patient room to ensure “zones” for the family, patient, and the clinician to provide environmental license to individualize patient care.

Evaluation: Nurses have assumed ownership for a new building which will begin construction in July 2010. During the pre-construction period, assessment using established tools such as Achieving Excellence in Design Evaluation Toolkit (AEDET) and A Staff Patient Environment Calibration Tool (ASPECT) will be utilized and compared to results of a post-construction assessment.

Results: Nurses were respected as important, credible, critical participants throughout the design process to augment evidence-based design elements with clinical-practice expertise.

Recommendations: Engagement of nurses in the design of an acute-care facility be the standard for hospital design.

Lessons Learned: Establish timelines for User Group members to communicate with other frontline staff.

Bibliography:

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